

Angels and Their Wings

Brittany Hall

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Instructor: Mr. Paul Crawford

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A writing experience I will never forget was when I wrote a poem to my grandfather, the late Pat Efferson. The poem was about my grandmother, and I read it at her funeral. In 1991, my grandmother, Ruby S. Hall, married Elwood Efferson, affectionately called Pat. Paw-Paw Pat, a man who used his creative talent to show his love for music and writing, thought of Granny as his angel. Granny was a loving, caring wife and mother. She was brought up to do anything for those who needed her and also was taught that a wife should serve her husband. They were married only seven years before he passed away.

Soon after their marriage, Paw-Paw Pat wrote a poem to Granny titled "Angels Don't Have Wings." This poem was framed and put on the wall of their bedroom. After Paw-Paw Pat died in March of 2002, Granny read me what he had written. Although she often discussed the poem, I never paid much attention to its meaning until Granny passed away on February 28, 2006. At that time, I was a junior in high school, taking English and learning how to write creatively.

When my family planned the funeral, they wanted me to make some type of speech at the service. I was pleased to be asked to speak, but I had a difficult time deciding what I was going to say. Immediately, I remembered the poem Paw-Paw Pat had written. I went to Granny's house, retrieved the poem, and studied it repeatedly. However, I still was not sure what I was going to read or say. On the morning of Granny's funeral, I woke up and began to write. The result was a poem titled "She's Our Angel" that answered the question in the last sentence of the poem by

Paw-Paw Pat.

In the last stanza of "Angels Don't Have Wings," Paw-Paw Pat posed the question, "Could it be that she's our angel? / Cause angels don't have wings." This part meant so much to me that my poem "She's Our Angel" is based on that one question. The final stanza of my poem reads, "To answer your question, Paw-Paw Pat, Yes, she's our angel, / And I bet she has her wings." While Paw-Paw Pat's poem refers more to how he felt about Granny and how amazing she was, my poem is about how we will remember her and how she will watch over us forever. When I finished writing, I was excited about reading it to my late grandparents, Granny and Paw-Paw Pat.

I brought both my poem and the framed poem to the funeral with me. When I arrived, my family could see how nervous I was. My Aunt Diane said, "Brittany, are you sure you are okay reading this? If not, we can have someone else read it for you." But, since I had written it, I thought I should read it. In order for the congregation to understand my writing, I had to read the original poem, as well.

"Would you like someone to walk up to the podium with you?" my dad asked, since he thought this might be too much for me to handle because I was so upset.

"Yes," I replied.

As the service began, I was nervous about reading the poems; however, I knew it would make Granny proud. When it was my turn to read, my cousin Sarah and I shuffled to the podium where I read Paw-Paw Pat's poem "Angels Don't Have Wings." The congregation was in tears, as was I, but I knew I had to continue. I took a deep breath, flipped the pages, and began to read my poem "She's Our Angel."

After I finished, I sat down by my dad, who asked, "Don't you think you should put Paw-

Paw Pat's poem in the casket with Granny?" This made sense to me, considering she held that poem so close to her heart; she read it every chance she could and always talked about it. I knew if she had it with her, she could read it anytime she wanted. After walking to say my final goodbye, I placed the poem in the casket with Granny.

A few days after the funeral, some family members asked for a copy of the poem I had written. I was proud of my work, and I know Granny was proud of it, as well. She likely is in Heaven right now showing all of her friends the poems "Angels Don't Have Wings" and "She's Our Angel." Granny was grateful for the things people did for her, even if it was just drawing a picture or fixing a cup of coffee; and, she was especially happy when people thought of her and even happier when they wrote about her. Therefore, I know she is watching me right now and smiling. Someday I will show these poems to my children so they, too, can see how wonderful Granny, their guardian angel, was.

Death is a sad subject. Even though I was upset about Granny's passing, I will never forget her funeral service because of the poem I wrote. Dying can either be a positive or negative event, depending on what a person makes of it. In my case, I tried to make my last memory of Granny the best it could be, and placing my thoughts of her into writing was the best way to create my remembrance. Although I will miss seeing her, I now have the memory of writing her poem and reading it at her funeral to remind me of my angel, Granny.